


THE COLOR OF LIFE



KATHERINE E. CONWAY



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Katherine E. Conway.

THE COLOR *of* LIFE

A Selection from the Poems of

KATHERINE E. CONWAY



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BY

J. J. CONWAY

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To

THE MANY FRIENDS
WHO WERE FAITHFUL TO THE END
J. J. C.

INTRODUCTION

IT is hard for those of us who were privileged to know Miss Conway and the magic of her friendship to write coldly of her or anything connected with her. It is hard for us to look with a dispassionate eye upon the work of her hands or the dreams of her soul. Above all it is hard for me to do so, for there is always the remembrance in my heart, not only of her encouraging words when, long ago, I was venturing timidly to try a 'prentice hand at verse, but also of the faithful and enduring kindness of more than thirty years.

Although ever a hard-working journalist, having constantly to do with the affairs of the moment and daily subject to the absorptions and distractions of the busiest of vocations, and although, added to this, for many years an invalid, Katherine E. Conway never deafened her ears to the clear call of the spirit, nor ceased to weave into well-wrought verse the fancies of a mind essentially poetic.

Through a poem she first attracted the attention of John Boyle O'Reilly, thereby winning an entrance into that brilliant literary circle of more than a generation ago; and it is in her poems, I believe, that she will be best remembered in time to come.

In saying this I do not intend, of course, to depreciate in any way her fine work as a prose writer. No one has been a more faithful reader of her novels, editorials and essays than I, nor a greater admirer of her facility and strength in those forms of literary-expression, but there has always been for me something in her poetry profoundly appealing.

With great pleasure, therefore, I learned last summer of the plans she was then making to publish another book of her verse. I looked forward to its appearance with the feeling that I should find therein the same qualities of emotion, the same clearness of phrasing, the same conscientious craftsmanship that I had found in those of her poems with which I was already familiar; and I was prepared to welcome the volume as a distinctly valuable contribution to the verse-literature of the present day, more especially to that part of it which has been the work of Catholic hearts and pens.

There was no disappointment for me when I came to read over the poems which she had prepared so lovingly and so carefully for this volume. Their strength and beauty were at once manifest. The only regret I had as I read them was that the glowing spirit which produced the verses herein printed would no longer move us with its strength or charm us with its loveliness. But such regret is not according to wisdom, after all, because there is in all the works she has left behind her, and especially in this volume, a beauty which I believe to be enduring; and while that remains with us, the spirit that fashioned it may most truly be said to be a living influence in the lives of the people whom Miss Conway loved and for whom she so bravely and untiringly wrought. And although she has now passed to where "beyond these voices there is peace," we may say of her what John Boyle O'Reilly said of a poet of another day: —

"The singer who lived is always alive,
We hearken and always hear."

Readers generally will find in these pages work of a very high order, vibrant with the deepest feeling, yet always restrained, noble and austere. Evidence many times repeated of a sincere and abiding belief in God will constantly rise to their attention, together with a consciousness of the happi-

ness of a sensitive and loving nature in the possession of the "faith once delivered to the saints."

Some of the poems in this collection have already appeared in print, either in her "Dream of Lilies," in her other volume, "On the Sunrise Slope," or as contributions to magazines; but many are published for the first time in this collection.

DENIS A. MCCARTHY

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THE LAST POEMS

1923-1926

AN EASTER CAROL

THE Angels saw first Easter Eve, but not to grieve, oh,
not to grieve.

The Angels left Jerusalem,

The Temple oped no more to them,

They clustered round a guarded Tomb the guards were
fain to leave.

The Angels scanned the changing skies, the soft spring skies,
the Easter skies,

The weary soldiers watched the Tomb,

And thought of Rome and thought of doom,

'Twas death to slumber on the watch — they prayed the
sun to rise.

But ere the sun the earthquake came, the rocks to rend,
Rome's seals to shame,

The guards upon their faces fell;

What had they seen? What could they tell?

They saw God's Majesty go forth encompassed with white
flame.

The women hastening through the gloom, the lifting gloom
with sweet perfume,

Wounds of the Virgin-born to bathe,

And linen, His dead limbs to swathe,

Spake: "Who shall roll the stone away that bars from us
the Tomb?"

Then sudden sprang the beauteous day, the splendid day,
first Easter Day.

An Angel to the women said:

"Why seek the living 'mong the dead?

Lo! Christ is risen, He is not here. Go meet Him on His
way."

That eve the women sat at meat — too glad to eat, too glad
to eat,
And Peter, James and John came in;
“Oh, sisters, tell us — you have seen —”
But they: “You know we’ve seen the Lord and kissed His
radiant feet.”

Spake Peter: “Lo! He told us all would Him befall, would
Him befall,
But dull and slow of heart were we,
But one could read the mystery.
His word pierced Mary’s heart of faith — she understood
it all.”

“Alas,” spake eager Salome, “I saw, and yet I could not see,
Of linens fine and ointments rare,
Naught saw I Mary’s hands prepare;
She knew, in robes by Angels wove, her Risen Son should be.”

* * *

To her He came at break of day, of lovely day, first Easter
Day.
She softly sighed: “My Son, so sweet,
My God” — she fell down at His feet;
But when He raised her to His heart, swooned in His arms
away.

THE SCRIBE OF MARY

'T IS writ in the Gospel-Book
Of the Evangelist Luke
And he had it every word
From the Mother of the Lord.

Once in the soft Spring weather,
As they sat silent together
In a garden at Ephesus,
'Mid the young flowers odorous
And the little green leaves astir,
A bird began to sing, —
Mary, remembering
Another Spring-time day,
In Nazareth far away
When God's Angel came to her,
Was wrapped as in ecstasy.
Her sweet face tenderly flushed
As if a pale rose blushed,
And her eyes like stars in a mist —
While Luke, the Evangelist,
Hearkened a Voice from heaven:
"Rejoice, rejoice, O Luke!
And write for thy Gospel-Book
Mysteries shown to thee."

So, of Luke the wondrous story
Of the Virgin's honor and glory,
And how Emmanuel came
By the mighty Spirit of God;
Soft as the dew to the sod
But strong as God of God
And flame of Creative Flame.

To Luke, the gift to read
Words in her heart long hid,
And to give them shricing fit
On the leaves of Holy Writ.

And last he wrote her name
With the Church in the Cenacle;
Virgin and Church uplift —;
Waiting the Father's Gift,
Waiting Christ's work complete,
Waiting the Paraclete —
And all he wrote was well.

O Flower of the field untrod,
The sweetest ever bloomed
From Jesse's root and rod
Flame-girt but unconsumed —
O Flower, whose fruit was God!

Thrice blessed, indeed, was he
Chosen thy scribe to be.

HER LITTLE DYING SON

I heard a word — that I must die;
And then I heard my mother cry.

She would not cry, if she could see
How close Lord Jesus is to me.

I hide my face against His breast,
In His kind hand my hands are pressed.

And on my hair I feel His breath, —
I'm not afraid of you, O Death!

Then some one told how long I slept, —
I knew his watch my angel kept.

But sleepiness is gone from me,
Great songs I hear, great lights I see.

In bed, a little, still child lies,
And my fond mother cries and cries.

O mother, wipe your eyes and see
The dear Lord Jesus holding me!

His arm is underneath my head! —
Oh, it is splendid — being dead!

TWO EDENS

WITH thorns and thistles pierced, my feet
Are bleeding; and my bread I eat —
Wrung from a hard, reluctant soil —
In sweat of penitential toil.

In dreams, to Eden's gate I flee,
In dreams, the Tree of Life I see;
But, ah! no dream his watch and ward,
The Angel with the Flaming Sword.

O thou who seest the Father's face,
Ask mercy — drop thine hands a space;
And again let me enter in
To Eden. Be the dream, my sin.

With God in sunshine there I've walked;
With God, as friend to friend, I've talked.
The warder speaks no pitying word,
Stern Angel, with the Flaming Sword.

* * *

O me! What Presence maketh dim
That flaming sword? The Light Supreme —
Even the Angel in eclipse!
Speak, loving eyes; speak, tender lips.

“O thou who toilest, come to Me,
Refreshment, light, and peace for thee,
And pure as little child from sin,
To My new Eden enter in.

“Eat of the Tree of Life; for I
Am Tree and Fruit — and none can die
In whom I dwell. Earth days are brief
With budding leaf and falling leaf.

“I lived, and loved, and suffered. See
Thorn, brier, and spear, and nail in Me.
The hands that toiled have also bled,
Though now they glow with light instead.

“Wouldst miss the toil? The time is fleet.
Wouldst shirk the pain? Ah! sweet, so sweet
That words can tell it not, the balm
Of healing, and the unwithering Palm.”

I turned from old-time Eden's gate,
Nor felt my life left desolate:
I grieved not his unspoken word,
The Angel with the Flaming Sword.

The greater Light hath quenched the less,
The better Eden's happiness
Is mine. Again, with God I walk;
With Him, as friend to friend, I talk.

He comes in soul and flesh to be
The pledge of immortality;
All at the altar at my door;
Yea, even God can do no more.

IN TIME OF CLOUD

A traveler on the narrow way,
God barreth haste in time of cloud;
So drag my footsteps, day by day,
While fears mine heart enshroud.

The path is rough, though oft-times trod,
And only darkening skies I see;
But while I clutch Thine hand, my God,
I cannot fall from Thee.

What though no touch responsive, Lord,
Nor any soul-uplifting sign!
No man's nor demon's mightiest sword
Can strike mine hand from Thine.

For in the cloud Thou'rt with me still;
I draw my life and strength from Thee.
I bide Thy time, I wait Thy Will,
Whose Love is hid from me.

THE UNBEGINNING AND UNENDING GOD

CLASH, as on myriad anvils myriad hammers,
Till air vibrateth as with battle strife
Of futile theories and futile clamors
Of Nature, Science and the Source of Life.

None bringeth rest nor peace nor comfort near me,
Nor showeth any lasting thing to love;
Nor hope of better, later fate to cheer me,
Nor aught worth while to turn my gaze above.

Why — but I doubt not; 'tis my weak endeavor
In faith, hope, love, to lift me from the sod.
I know Thee here, for all men and forever,
My unbeginning, everlasting God.

Yea, my soul riseth into light entralling,
But, dazzled, toppleth, filled with wild alarms;
Helpless, through depths of darkness falling, falling —
Safe! — underneath the everlasting Arms.

Yea, more, it taketh wings of morn for flying
To farthest universe's farthest star!
And even there, Thy love and care undying
And all Thy Triune benedictions are.

Why hast Thou made us, set Thy seal upon us?
And why, Great Maker, hast Thou made us free?
Thou couldst have made us so Thou must have won
us,
Nor any doubt, deny, or fall from Thee.

Who shall interpret Thee to Thy poor dreamer?

Nay, God alone of God can testify.

My human Brother, my Divine Redeemer, —

Lo, He will show Thee, even to such as I.

And He has come and shown Thee, but divested

Of aught to fright His least of little ones;

For in my tabernacle He hath rested,

Who made me — and Who made the countless suns.

THE PASSING OF JOSEPH OF NAZARETH

O God! I die, but still with me
Thy ways, as erst, are mystery.
For when to man was ever given
While still on earth to dwell in heaven?
Surely 'tis heaven in this place
Where Christ looks up and sees Thy face
As I see His — and Mary's smile
Makes rapture in my heart the while.
Ah! never yet, since time began,
Hath it befallen any man
From heaven's peace and warmth and glow,
Into the Twilight Land to go.

With me — I speak a daring thing —
Thy Wisdom, almost counseling,
Unto my care and keeping gave —
And I a silent man and grave,
An artisan in middle years —
Her whom Thine angel host reveres,
Thy dearest, fairest, holiest,
Of all Thy goodly creatures best,
As Ever-Virgin wife to me
And Mother of Thy Son to be.

Ah me! was ever mortal man
So wrought into the Godhead's plan?
To guard and guide the Child Divine,
To rule the Prince of David's line,
And to a poor man's lowly trade
Train hands that heaven and earth have made!

But now I die; and still with me
Thy ways, O God! are mystery.
I leave a home with love replete,
And tenderest cares and labor sweet,
From heaven's joy and warmth and glow,
Into the Twilight Land to go.

Life-long, my God, Thy Blessed Will
I've worshiped, and I worship still.
Yet now, if it may be, I pray
Longer at Nazareth to stay,
With Mary, lonely when her Son
Upon Thine high behests is gone.
Yea, more, O God! I'm fain to be
Beside her, when the prophecy
Of holy Simeon long ago
Shall be fulfilled. Not yet I know
Wherefore the sword must pierce her soul,
Yet, seemeth me, that day of dole
Is not so far away from her.
Oh, let me be her comforter
As erstwhile in her griefs I was.

* * *

O God! my God! Thy holy laws
Of change and death press down on me!
No more Thy ways are mystery;
For Mary's tears are on my hands,
And Jesus close beside me stands,
His voice is sweet within my heart:
"Ah, Joseph, not for long we part."
Thy Will, Thy Will, O God! and so
From heaven to Twilight Land I go.

DAVID

ALWAYS before me, O my God, my God!
Where'er I turn, my woful sin I see.

I cannot choose but fear a sin forgiven,
Though earthed by man and never named in
Heaven —

I put Thy Cross between my sin and me.

Always before me, O my God, my God!
Sheathed in my heart, the sword of Thy decree
And sackcloth under kingly robes I wear, —
I fast, I turn on thorns, I watch in prayer, —
But still Thy Cross between my sin and me.

Always before me, O my God, my God!
The ghost of my dead sin affrighteth me.
But when I've gazed till I can gaze no more,
And my soul fainteth and my heart is sore,
I put Thy Cross between my sin and me.

Always before me, O my God, my God!
No drug I seek for fearsome memory.
For though my sin be red as fire is red,
I've cowered in vision where Thy Blood was shed;
And so, Thy Cross between my sin and me!

ANNUNCIATION NIGHT

'T WAS night on the village of Nazareth,
But the dark, like the dusk of a blessed death,
Was pierced with splendor and voices tender,
And the breeze died down to a zephyr's breath.

Stars sang as they swung in their ordered courses,
And planets circling around the sun.
And all life stirred at its inmost sources,
For sense of the Wonder on earth begun.

But the little fair Virgin of Nazareth slept,
Dreaming the touch of the hand of her Child;
And angels above her their vigil kept,
And oft in her sleep she tenderly smiled —

For God to His own creation knit
Her life and His, not a breath apart;
While Heaven was a-thrill at the thought of it,
The Hope of the Worlds hidden under her heart!

CHRIST RISEN GREETETH DEATH

WHO is He that comes from Edom — in scarlet robes
from Edom;
The Beautiful One a-walking in strength and majesty?
'Tis our Hope, and all men need Him — the Bringer of
our freedom,
And He lifts aloft a standard most wonderful to see.

Oh, what He wrought to save us! Oh, what a Gift He gave us!
Lo, on feet and hands and forehead fair, full many a wound
we see.
His wounds tell the story, while they shine like suns with
glory,
And He'll wear them forever where His spoils of battle be.

But who would contend or take chance with our Defender?
Only one who never yet had seen unfallen foe.
'Twas Death would pursue Him, and strive to undo Him,
And think that he slew Him in the Tomb laid low.

But Christ, on Easter morning, the grim Sepulchre scorning,
Came forth in strength and splendor and stood to meet
His foe.

Then Death said: "I fall before Thee, my Master, I adore
Thee!

By the sign that Thou hast conquered me, the Son of God
I know.

"But since I confess Thee and for Thy victory bless Thee,
And in proof of my pardon Thine overthrow to dare,
Give me a token, since my power Thou hast broken,
That I'm to Thine a messenger with welcome news to
bear."

Then Christ to Death spake gladly; "Yea, e'en the just
go sadly.

I have traversed thy valley — 'twas black and cold to me;
But I have lit the valley, lest the powers of darkness rally,
With a myriad shining Crosses — like this that conquered
thee!"

THE LAW OF THE CROSS

Lo, 'tis down in God's plan
Even for you and me; —
Every child of Man,
Since the years of Christ began,
Finds his Gethsemane.

Watching Christ's dark hour thro',
He bears his test aright;
For only the chosen few,
Of all the good and true,
The climb to Calvary's height.

Oh, the Way of the Cross!
The way of sorrow and loss,
But shortened and smoothed: —
And its bruises soothed: —
For the weak who would be true,
Faint-hearts like me and you.

Let us take the road with a song,
Maybe 'twill not be long,
Let us tread, whatever betide,
In the steps of the One Sure Guide
To the Land of All Delight.

Fear not Gethsemane —
A sterner test may be,
But only for the few.

Dear, if for me and you
The call Divine and clear,
The call hearts quake to hear —
To climb to Calvary's height —
What were our answer, Dear?
Pray that God keep us true.

JERUSALEM AND CHRIST THE KING

Suggested by the proclamation of Pope Pius XI of Jesus Christ as King of the Human Race; and the urging of the Rabbi Wise, head of the Zionist movement, to "reclaim" Christ.

REJOICE, rejoice, Jerusalem, in His Name!
Christians, your King as King of Men proclaim;
And David's Son, Whom David called his Lord,
Is now by men of all earth's tribes adored.
O lift thine eyes, Jerusalem, and see
His throne, Who came to all men first through thee.

Twice from their hands the Son of David fled,
Who sought by force to take Him; crown His head;
And lay within His wonder-working hand
Scepter and sword — with "King, we wait command,
Subjects and soldiers, Christ of Nazareth,
Ruler of winds and waves and Lord of Death!"

But once for crowning waited David's Son —
Despised, forsaken, to the world undone.
By treacherous craft to Caesar's power betrayed,
Crowned with sharp thorns, in scarlet robe arrayed.
"King of the Jews", — so ran the Roman writ —
And Calvary's cross to men attested it.

Arise, Jerusalem, as thy Prophet saith, —
Hail Him Who brake Rome's seals and conquered Death;
And ever since, through every century,
Greatened to Gentiles — but reached hands to thee.
Still, still thine eyes were held. Oh, claim Him, claim —
Go back to Zion in the Conqueror's Name.

Cry to Him: "Linger here on David's throne.
Thine are all nations, Thou our very own,
By bond of flesh and by the Might of God."

Set wide thy gates, and make thy pathways broad
Till all Mankind flow Zionward, and see
Visions of prophets all fulfilled in thee;
Banners of nations round His throne unfurled,
And thine own King the King of all the World.
And men in freedom, truth, and love are one,
And God's Will, as in Heaven, on earth is done!

SOME SONGS OF YOUTH AND
LOVE

A LIFE'S REGRET

O long-lost friend, what have I harvested
Of thy youth's bloom and mine, with its delight
Of love and laughter and fore-runnings bright?
Not peace, not hope, but life-long pain instead.
Sometimes this sleepeth, till I dream it dead —
When lo! a word, a look, a soft-drawn breath,
And into fullest life it wakeneth,
Ah, me! unrested and uncomforted
For all its sleep. How could I let thee stray
Into the vale of death, thy torch unlit,
And mine ablaze that might have kindled it?
Oh, what befell thee on that fearsome way?
And oh, what greeting would be thine to me
Could thy voice reach me from eternity?

A SONG OF THE MAYTIME

A song of the joyful Maytime,
A song like the song of a bird —
A song of the heart in its playtime,
With never a sorrowful word!

A song — but whence shall I win it?
Though my heart for the open cries;
With the ripple of rivulets in it,
And the glow of the glad sunrise.

This is the song you ask, dear,
Would I could do your will!
But, set we a song for a task, dear,
A test of the singer's skill?

A dweller in cities ever,
A toiler within the walls,
'Mid the tumult of man's endeavor,
Where the unseen fetter galls —

Little I know of the tender
Blithe songs that the free birds sing;
Little I know of the splendor
Of the wild wood's blossoming;

And less of the heart's sweet playtime —
So brief was mine, you know;
For the flowers of my beautiful Maytime
Died under a strange, late snow.

Yet you've loved this sad song-voice, dear,
You would give it a wider range;
And because of your honor and choice, dear,
'Twere fain to ring out and rejoice, dear,
With the mirth of the Maytime change.

Oh, joy to be your joy-bringer!
But let me be far away
If a fairer and gladder singer
Should sing your song of the May.

OUTGROWN — A WOMAN'S TRAGEDY

AT least I loved and was beloved. To mine unfading honor,

The man I would have chosen, out of all the world, chose me;
And crowned and gemmed and dowered me — O lavish,
kingly donor!

With all he had, and all he was, and all he dreamed to be.

Oh, the first dear love of love like this, sweet fears, hopes
vague and tender

Of waking heart and lily-bud and song of bird in May!

Why, the very clouds were golden — fast melting in the
splendor

Of the rich, rose-hearted rising of the sun of my new day.

Now would to God love always stayed at prelude and at
promise —

Ah, me! that best of love should be the hope of love unwon!
I want the bloom, the breeze, the bird that long ago went
from us —

Dream and desire have fruited — and the joy of love is done.

Nay, nay — a vainer prayer, my God! would that with
angels' seeing

I'd seen myself, and turned from him with steadfast heart to
say —

"Go up and far beyond me, to the heights of thine own being,
And find her who can rise with thee — she's further on thy
way."

But I saw myself transfigured by the honor and the splendor
Of his choosing — and I loved him — but with soul too
small to guess

Of the love to love best proven by denial, not surrender —
Oh, I had been almost worthy knowing mine unworthiness.

Oh, I sing it low, and sing it slow, and to mine own heart
only,
And just to ease its aching, lest in tears it overbrim;
When he seeks me where he set me, in his name's place,
high and lonely,
The eyes he said were beautiful must still be bright for him.

O me! I was too slight a thing:—no full-fed fountain
springing
To refresh his sense and spirit in the desert places drear;
But a shallow April brooklet 'mid the ferns and grasses
singing,
Shrinking to a thread of silver when summer heats were
here.

O me! I was too slight a thing:—a playday's brief delight-
ing —
Yet, strong enough to fetter him and bar his upward way;
But he bears his bondage graciously, in pitiful requiting
Of the poor, dumb, worthless worship that he tired of
yesterday.

Oh, if I mourned a lesser love, some comfort I might find,
dear,
But first of men and best of love:—can less things comfort
me?
Forever fevered and athirst, and Eden far behind, here
My prayer for him — Would God that I were dead and he
were free!

But I sing it low and sing it slow, this song of my life's
sorrow;
And to mine own heart only, lest in tears it overbrim.
He may seek me where he set me, on this lonely height,
tomorrow,
And the eyes he said were beautiful must still be bright for
him.

THE HEART UNFILLED TILL HEAVEN

THE least of loving is in having, dear;
To-morrow you will wake to weariness,
And shrink, betimes, in heart-sickness and fear,
Ah, woe! from hands that now you'd kneel to kiss.
You'll wake to your life-dream fulfilled, aghast;
Would God this dream, as other dreams, had passed!

The least of loving is in having. Light
Night with a firefly; quench the flame that glows
From thirst for the exhaustless, Infinite,
With the small dewdrop in the heart of a rose.
The best of loving will be having, never,
Till having all, you're sure of it forever!

EASTER ROSES

NO lilies for Easter even,
But roses came instead,
Sweet, like a breath from Heaven,
And red with a day-dawn red.

A wild wet wind was blowing,
The rain was on the roof,
As I waked with a gold thread glowing
Through a dull dream's warp and woof.

I waked to the rosebud's promise
Filling my house and heart,
While they whispered, "Shrink not from us!
We are of your dream a part.

"The part that will come true, dear,
If you make for us a place;
Enough, enough of the rue, dear,
Joy is the Easter grace."

O roses, roses, roses —
Haven't you lost your way?
Behold my casement closes
Against the brighter day!

O roses, roses, roses —
What have I to do with you,
Till the gate of Heaven uncloses,
And all things are made new?

Why shut mine eyes to the presage
So plain that all may read?
Why cheat my heart with a message
Meant for another's need?

I will not trust joy's winning
Till I see 'mid the shadows dread,
The blush of life beginning
On a face of a love days dead.

"O silence," said the roses;
"O heart of little faith
That seeks for a sign and closes
With sign from the Lord of death.

"The flower of predilection,
The sign that will not fail,
For the rose is resurrection
As well as the lily pale.

"The rose for your new day's breaking
And all the joy thereof,
And the blush of life awaking
On the face of long dead love."

MISPRIZED

I HAD a lovely pearl — a wondrous one —
 The rarest, purest pearl in all the land.
O, my dim eyes that saw not how it shone!
I dropped it in the dust, nor mourned it gone,
 But kissed the flaunting flowers in my hand.

To-day — oh, late and vain or tears or prayer!
 O, late and vain, lost pearl, my fondest quest!
Though now, at last, I know thee radiant fair,
And now I know thee sweet beyond compare —
 Now that thou shinest on another's breast.

NEPENTHE

THY sweetest memories perish,
Thy bitterest remain;
How long, how long wilt cherish
Dark dreams of by-gone pain?

Oh, the wisdom of forgetting,
Which the burdened heart should crave!
Oh, the folly of regretting
What regret no more can save!

Look to the coming splendor,
Thou on the sunrise slope,
Nor thus to memory render
The tribute claimed by hope.

ONLY FRIENDS

(At an Afternoon Tea)

ENGAGED to him? I've known him all my life —
Through many a trouble we've stood by each other.
But marriage is a different thing — his wife?
I'd think, as soon, of marrying my brother.

Of course, there never were two better friends —
Though still mere friends — than he and I. But —
loving!
Why, when you bring that in all comfort ends
In weariness of proving and disproving.

Indeed, I wish that he would marry. So
I told him only yesterday; for, clearly,
A man should have his home. But he, you know,
Is hard to please and loves his freedom dearly.

They say he often visits Agnes Lee?
Oh, yes, — They're neighbors, — She's a lovely woman,
Though not in her first youth; no more is he, —
But she's a saint, and he's — well — very human.

I'm sure I wish they'd marry — then you see,
I'd have not one but two dear friends. — I wonder
Why the old gossip brings this tale to me,
And if it's true, or just her stupid blunder!

And people talk of Agnes for his wife,
And not one word from him to me about it!
I know I've told him *nearly all my life*, —
He says he tells me everything, — I doubt it.

I wish she'd go away, — Dear, won't you sing?
What! I look tired and pale? Ah, now you're jesting!
What did she say to Meg — the horrid thing —
Of Shakespeare's lady and too much protesting?

What do I want? I wouldn't marry him
Were he the last man. Yet, consistence human!
The taste goes out of life, the light grows dim,
To think that he might choose another woman.

Alone at last, thank Heaven! Why, that's his ring!
At home? — No — Yes — I'll see what this portends,
Though when I'm tired I look like — anything!
That matters nothing, — we are only friends.

THE ROOT OF ALL GRIEF

THERE'S a woman at root of everyone's grief,
The wisdom of time avers;
The woman at his, be he chiel or chief,
The other woman at hers.

THE WIDOWED BRIDE

I KNEW not sorrow till I knew thee; yet
I cannot wish, dear, that we had not met.
For, oh, my life, ere it thy smile had won,
Like some pale stream that never saw the sun,
Mirrored but twilight skies. Then, then, thy dawn!
The song-birds woke, far fled the shadows wan.
Late come, short stayed, poor stream, thy glory's gone,
The sun that taught what shadow is withdrawn.

I live as erst, nor all regretfully,
Though, where thou art, no more on earth to be.
The strength that nerves me is of thine a part,
The hope that cheers was warmed in thy brave heart;
The light where thou hast been is shining yet,
Towards the same goal our sundered steps are set.
Oh, loved and grieved — my rapture, my regret!
How could I wish that we had never met?

OF THE EARTH EARTHY

MY mother's prayer when, morn or even,
She lit or quenched a household light:
"Grant us, O Lord, the light of Heaven!"
Or, "Guard us through the night!"

The prayer my mother used to pray,
I breathe it from a weary heart;
For one light quenched upon my way,
Of my life's dearest part.

O God, in loneliness and fear
Remembered; other times forgot!
O Heaven — a vision sweet and dear
When earth delighteth not!

How can I climb the mountain height,
Who never even a hill-top scaled?
To help me to Thy feet, relight
Dear God, the light that failed!

A LIFETIME LOVE

OH, I am tired of having you dead;
Tired of an anguish uncomforted.
I can never get used to your vacant place,
Nor cured of missing your vanished face.

For a year's young love a man morns a year:
You were half of my life for a lifetime, dear;
And all of life's sunshine, and all of its Spring
And the grace and sweetness of everything.

More love for the asking? Old friends and new?
Yea, but where is a friend like you?
All that woman and man can be —
Lovers and comrades and friends were we.

Were our loves begun with our lives begun?
Was there ever a day when we were not one?
Had we ever a separate hope or fear —
Oh, can you, can you remember, dear?

Oh, I am tired of having you dead,
Tired of waiting the word unsaid;
Tired of the night and tired of the day
In the house that was home till you went away.

Oh, lifetime love, in your heaven pray
That God may speed us our meeting day.
For I'm tired of an anguish uncomforted,
Tired, so tired of having you dead.

THE FIRST RED LEAF

IT hides amid the foliage green
While earth is fair and skies serene;
A little, fluttering, scarlet leaf,
The herald of a coming grief.

It saith to Summer: "Even so
Thy fading time is near, I trow;
And I am come to whisper thee
Of gloomy days that yet must be.

"A little longer wear thy crown,
Nor lay thy flowery sceptre down;
And, in the sun's benignant smile,
Forget thy fears a little while.

"I shall not see thee pass away
Swift is my coming, brief my stay.
Scarce may the blessed daylight shine
On beauty shorter-lived than mine.

"But know that thou art past thy prime,
'Tis drawing near, thy fading time.
I am the herald of thy grief,
The first red leaf, the first red leaf."

IN THE DESERT

THE sand is hot beneath my tired feet.

No shade of spreading tree nor shrub is near;
Nor sound of smallest brooklet, rippling sweet,

Breaketh the awful silence reigning here; —
Only the sun from his meridian throne
Glareth upon the desert vast and lone.

Oh, once through woodland and through field I strayed;

And friends were with me. We sang out in glee,
Until the birds with answering chorus made

The woodland ring with blithest melody.
And I was happy; for no shadow chill
Fell o'er my path to bode of coming ill.

Was it a dream, as bright as it was brief,

The vanished glory of those yester-years?

And have I waked to the surprise of grief,

To suffering and fulfillment of all fears?
Sweet dream, if such thou wert I scarce can tell,
But fare thee well, forever, fare thee well!

Ah, me! how long the days are and how dreary

As lone I wander in this desert land!

And all in vain, till I am faint and weary,

Seeking for footprints in the trackless sand.
And oh, to think the cool, green paths I trod,
But led me here at last, my God, my God!

ENEMIES

NO foe like the foe that was once a friend,
No hate like what once was love.
Fearfully through the gloom I wend,
Where shall I hide me or how defend
From the poison shafts thereof?

Once at your name for joy I'd start,
Where now I thrill with fear.
Once we were happiest heart to heart,
Who now, the width of the world apart,
Are still — ah, God — too near!

All the days of my life to rue
The day that I saw your face;
All my doing but to undo
My weakness and woe — that I once loved you,
And that once I won your grace!

Hate and horror for evermore: —
Oh, was it for this, I pray,
Just to know how to wound most sore
That we read each other's hearts to the core
Ere the dark dividing day?

Is hate like love, will it cast out fear,
And Memory and Hope defy —
And the cross on the grave that to both is dear,
The desolation and anguish drear,
Of the death that we both must die?

THE HEAVIEST CROSS OF ALL

I'VE borne full many a sorrow, I've suffered many a loss —
But now, with a strange, new anguish, I carry this last
dread cross;
For of this be sure, my dearest, whatever thy life befall,
The cross that our own hands fashion is the heaviest cross of
all.

Heavy and hard I made it in the days of my fair strong
youth,
Veiling mine eyes from the blessed light, and closing my
heart to truth.
Pity me, Lord, whose mercy passeth my wildest thought,
For I never dreamed of the bitter end of the work my hands
had wrought!

In the sweet morn's flush and fragrance I wandered o'er
dewy meadows,
And I hid from the fervid noontide glow in the cool, green,
woodland shadows;
And I never recked as I sang aloud in my wilful, selfish glee,
Of the mighty woe that was drawing nigh to darken the
world for me.

But it came at last, my dearest,— what need to tell thee
how?
Mayst never know of the wild, wild woe that my heart is
bearing now!
Over my summer's glory crept a damp and chilling shade,
And I staggered under the heavy cross that my sinful hands
had made.

I go where the shadows deepen, and the end seems far off
yet —
God keep thee safe from the sharing of this woful late regret!
For of this be sure, my dearest, whatever thy life befall,
The crosses we make for ourselves, alas! are the heaviest ones
of all.

GOODNIGHT

(From the French)

TOMORROW, dear!

O little word, oft fraught with fear!
Goodnight, goodnight — Oh, should there be
No other morn for thee and me!
Perhaps, if Heaven revealed the morrow,
We'd part in sorrow.

Goodnight, goodnight!

Far from us flies the day's delight;
But still, sun-warm and lily-fair,
God's blessing lights the darkening air,
Making the ways before us bright.
Goodnight, goodnight!

EXPIATION

“When the soul sees pain like a sun”

THEY closed my eyes, they folded my hands, they said:
“’Tis a sign of grace.

See how the look of her childhood comes back to her poor
dead face.

Forgive her, forget her; after all, her lines were hard at best.
Surely her sorrow outweighs her sin — poor heart! at welcome rest.”

At rest! there is no more rest — there is no more night nor
sleep.

It is always day, it is always noon; and a fearsome watch
I keep:

Unsetting sun in the cold blue heavens; sun on the snow-
fields wide,

Sun on sharp cliff and frozen sea and steep white mountain
side.

Glint and gleam and dazzle and glare — cloudless, shadow-
less light —

My God, my God! for an hour of sleep! My God, for the
blessed night!

This is my doom, my once most dear, who loved the shadows
well,

Who shrank so long from laughter and song and the ways
where the sunlight fell.

How could I love the sun, when the clouds encompassed
thee?

To stand by thy side in the darkness was dream of Heaven to
me.

Thy whispered word: "I need thee"— was payment for all
pain,
Making the crooked straight, making the rough ways plain.
Ah, more than faith, or friends, or fame, or shining spousal
ring,
That my hands to thee were helpful, that my voice was
comforting.

This is my doom, my once most dear, that all the veils are
riven,
And the wrong that I gave my life to hide lies bare to earth
and Heaven.
To own, in my sore despoilment, that roses cannot bloom
From the venomous thistle, nor grapes from thorns, nor
health from the reeking tomb.

This is my doom, my once most dear: The eyes of God were
stern;
But sterner far were the kindred eyes that still in my mem-
ory burn.
Like the flaming sword of the Angel at the gates of fair, lost
Eden,
Warning away from the Tree of Life — ; and the rivers of
healing hidden.
Saved at the last at an awful cost of sorrow and shame and
pain,
For I pledged my soul for an evil dream, and died for the
dream — in vain.

This is my drear atonement, who loved the shadows well;
Who shrank so long from laughter and song, and the ways
where the sunlight fell.
God has forgiven, but far from Heaven, till the end of time
to dwell,

Through an age-long day, through an age-long noon, my
fearsome watch to keep,
With never any more night, and never any more sleep.
While of all the eyes that I knew on earth, that look re-
proach on mine,
None I loved best, oh, once most dear, so stern and strange
as thine.

THE BURDEN OF THE DAY
AND THE HEAT

LOTUS AND LILY

SOMETIMES a dark hour cometh for us who are bound to
bear

The burden of lowly labor, the fetters of lowly care.

An hour when the heart grows sick of the work-day's weary
round,

Loathing each oft-seen sight, loathing each oft-heard sound!

Loathing our very life, with its pitiful daily need,
Learning in pain and weakness that labor is doom indeed.

And this the meed of the struggle — tent, and raiment and
bread?

Oh for the "Requiescant," and the sleep of the pardoned
dead!

Oh the visions that torture and tempt us (how shall the
heart withstand!) —

The fountains and groves and grottoes of the Godless Lotus-
land!

Oh the soft, entreating voices, making the tired heart leap,
"Come over to us, ye toilers, and we will sing ye to sleep."

A fatal sleep, I trow! but we are sad unto death,
And the Lotus-flower unmans us with its sweet and baneful
breath.

We look to our fellow-toilers — what help, what comfort there?

They're bowed by the self-same burden, beset by the self-same snare.

Falleth the ashen twilight — meet close for the dreary day;
Hark to the chimes from the church-tower! — but we are too tired to pray.

Ah, God, who lovest Thy creatures, sinful, and poor and weak,
Hear'st prayer in the tired heart's throbbing, though the lips are too tired to speak?

Is this Thy answer? Is this the herald of Thy peace?
For the Lotus withers before him, the songs of the Sirens cease.

And the palm-tree and the grottoes, fountains and streamlets bright,
Waver and change as he cometh, then fade from our weary sight.

He is worn with care and labor; he is garbed in lowliest guise,
But we know the firm, sweet mouth, and the brave, brave, patient eyes;

And we know the shining lilies — no blooms of mortal birth —
And we know thee, blessed Joseph, in the guise that was thine on earth.

Thy hands are hardened with toil, but they have toiled for Him
Upon whose bidding waited legions of Seraphim.

Thy hands have trained to labor the hands of Him who made
thee,
Whose strength upbore thy weakness when thine awful trust
dismayed thee.

Oh lift thy hands in appealing for us who, unwilling, bear
The burden of God's beloved, lowly labor and care.
Oh pity our fruitless tears, to-night, and our hearts too
tired for prayer!

LOST LABOR

O Giver of all good gifts! What render we
Again to Thee of all Thy hands have given?
What hast Thou of our strength, O God in Heaven?
Thou gavest the singing voice — what songs for Thee?
When most we fear Thee, a presumptuous leaven
Pervadeth all our prayer. Or, niggardly,
We grudge Thee what a friend hath full and free,
A thought at dawn of day, a word at even.
Lose not your patient sweat, O fashioners
With plane, or drill, or chisel — though the men
Of fairer face and softer hands forget.
They err, but the All-Knowing never errs.
What matter, when the work's done, plane or pen,
So the heart's will to God's dear Will was set!

Who gathereth not with me, he scattereth;
Who standeth not with me, against me stands —
Beating the air with unavailing hands;
His work is idleness, his life is death —
So warnest Thou, Christ, Lord of all lives and lands,
In whom our hope, yea, even our daily breath.
Oh, what men's praise? — a wind that fluttereth
The choking, blinding, burning desert sands.
Oh, what avails it that is not for Thee,
That spreads not every day the boundaries
Of Thine Earth-Kingdom; sets thy flag aflame
On farther heights and headlands? Oh, that we
Should lose for paltriest seeming all that is,
For time's exalting, risk eternal shame!

OLD YEAR'S GHOSTS AT NEW YEAR'S

"A Happy New Year and many!"—one or ten or a score? —

Till the old life's done and the new begun where we reckon
by years no more!

'Twere sweet to rest nor question, here at the fateful gate,
Unmindful of the years gone by as of the years that wait.

Oh, but the dead, lost years tonight, like souls in drearest
pain,

Grieve for all life's vain vigils, vain love and labor vain.

Where are the crowns of glory our pallid brows should wear?
Where the immortal fruitage our empty hands should bear?

Where are the songs of triumph it should be ours to sing?
What shall we plead for you and for us when we come before
the King?

Redeem us, oh, redeem us! and if you will — ah, well
The time that is left is so short at best that every day must
tell —

Late, seeing the end of the world in your fair shrines
lightning-riven,
In the signs in the sun and moon, in the stars that fell from
Heaven —

Stricken, shattered, sore-hearted, you shrank from the eyes
of men, —

Moaning, "O God, is Heaven the chance to begin again?"

But lo! the love of His Heart and the mercy of His ways,
To Whom the days are as ages, and the ages but as days.

Again the New Year dawneth — again the wondrous grace —
And still in your hands our ransom you hold for a little space,

But one year more, or many? — the time is short at best,
Redeem us, oh, redeem us! the restless dead would rest.”

NEW LAND AND NEW LIFE

BEHOLD your quest is ended,
And the new land strange and splendid,
No longer luring from afar, is firm beneath your tread;
And the way is free before ye,
The skies unclouded o'er ye,
And the past is dust and darkness, and the dead have earthed
their dead.

Raise your cross and raise your altar,
Why shrink ye thus, and falter?
Are ye men, or love-lorn maidens? ye late were stern and
brave,
What's worth a strong man's weeping?
The New Land hath in keeping —
Guerdon for valiant battle that the Old Land never gave.

Have done with fruitless yearning,
Know ye not there's no returning?
The wrathful sea's between ye and your far-off fatherland.
The worst it threatens brave ye.
Now from yourselves I save ye —
Lo, the ships that brought ye hither ablaze upon the
strand!

THE SHRINE PROFANED

HOW is the fine gold dimmed, the kingly purple faded —
The light of the sun in the midday heaven by mists malign
o'ershaded!

The stones of the temple scattered — the gems of the inner
shrine

Trodden down in the mire, and the sacred cups profaned
with the heathen's wine!

I thought I had died to see it, but that was when I forgot
The Strength that is Almighty, and the Love that sleepeth
not.

Now I rest in His arms unfearing; in Him is my heart's
trust.

The sun will pierce thro' the poison-mist, the gold is under
the rust;

And the stones and the gems re-gathered, a temple far
more fair

Than the one I loved, will arise at last to the patience of
my prayer.

A BRAVE MAN'S HOPE

From the French of Louis Veuillot

I HOPE in Thee, O Christ; on earth I never
Blushed for Thy Cross nor Thee;
And on the Judgment Day, before Thy Father,
Thou wilt not blush for me.

“YE DID IT UNTO ME”

WE read the sad, sweet story of the life of Christ on earth,
And murmur through fast-flowing tears, “Ah, Lord, Thou’d
 hadst no dearth
Of all our love could yield Thee, had only we been there!
Our homes, our hearts, our labor’s fruit — what joy with
 Thee to share.”

We read the sad, sweet story — “Whate’er ye do” (saith He)
“To the least of these, My little ones, ye do it unto Me;”
But we somehow miss its meaning, and somehow we forget
That, in His homeless little ones, Christ walks among us yet.

In them He suffers hunger, in them He is a-weary,
In them is cold and shelterless, astray in by-ways dreary.
Shall we go peaceful, happy, nor fear a taint of sin,
While we ope no door in pity to let the Christ-Child in?

Go, spread your wings, sweet angel, bright messenger from
 Heaven!
Go, whisper unto every heart the gracious promise given;
Christ judgeth not by honors, world-fame, or gold or glory —
List to the solemn warning of the holy Gospel Story:

What time ye stand before Him in the awful judgment day
When Earth and Heaven, fire-tried, like a scroll have rolled
 away,
They pass, but He remaineth, and this your test shall be,
“As ye did unto the least of Mine, so did ye unto Me.”

SUCCESS

AH! know what true success is. Young hearts dream,
Dream nobly, and plan loftily, nor deem
That length of years is length of living. See!
A whole life's labor in an hour is done;
Not by world-tests the Heavenly crown is won —
To God the Man is what he means to be.

THE CHRISTMAS THORN

— “Where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of Our Lord.”

FOR your sorrowful Christmas Day
What word can I dream or say,
That will not mock the desolate house where you sit and
grieve apart;
Or whence you look, I know
On thorn and flint and snow,
While the worst of the thorns, ah me! are sheathed in your
bleeding heart.

Oh, I mind one Christmas night —
A long-ago delight —
When together we smiled or sighed over stories quaint and
old;
And that of the winter thorn
A-bloom on Christmas morn,
Comes back to me to-night as the sweetest ever told.

Oh, you will not shrink to hear
The word that it gives me, dear,
For the empty house and the desolate heart, and the tears
that must have way.
This the poor thorn's renown:
“I made the only crown
That He ever wore on earth, who is Lord of the Christmas
Day.

“And I blossom on Christmas morn,
Remembering He was born
With the heart of man to suffer and the hands of God to
heal.

Oh joy, for the barren places,
The dreary, storm-swept spaces,
Where the sudden flower and vine will the paths of His
feet reveal."

Sad heart, whatever I do,
I cannot comfort you,
For through mine own tears I see the light of the Christmas
morn.

And so, my sweetest friend,
The only word I send
Must be cheer for you and me alike — the word of the
Christmas thorn.

CHRIST AND THE MOURNERS

DOWN on the shadowed stream of time and tears,
Voice of new grief and grief of ancient years —
Sad as when first from loving lips 'twas sighed —
“Hadst Thou been here, my brother had not died.”

Comfort us, Lord, who heardst poor Martha's plaint,
Heal the sore heart, uplift the spirit faint —
O Thou, the Peace that cometh after strife!
O Thou, the Resurrection and the Life!

Why didst Thou take the love we leaned on so?
We know not, but hereafter we shall know.
Speaks now our faith, through tears Thou wilt not chide,
“Most wert Thou here when our belovèd died.”

A MODERN PHARISEE

UP to the church he went to pray,
In his foremost place in the middle aisle:
The Pharisee, pompous and grave and gray,
With his measured step and his unctuous way,
And his solemn, sinister, seldom smile.

“Thank God I am not as the rest of men” —
So prayed our goodly Pharisee —
“Rascals, nine of them out of ten,
Caught in their foolish tracks, and then
Not fit for decent society.”

With this, forth fared our Pharisee
To give his alms in the market-place,
With counsel and caution seasoned free;
And the press extolled his charity
With double leads honor and upper case.

Oh, he was hard on the sins of men,
This rigid, righteous Pharisee:
Rascals, nine of them out of ten!
And he bought and drave a terrible pen
Which scourged wrong-doers relentlessly.

But he sometimes sighed, our Pharisee —
For he was human, as most of us are —
For all that one must forego, to be
Set up for a shining light, as he,
Men’s fair exemplar and guiding star.

Nay, he sometimes lapsed,— hush! lower, lower,
For rich and great is our Pharisee!
But he locked the windows and barred the doors,
And padded the ceilings and walls and floors, —
“For the good example I owe,” said he.

Revel unseen — unseen? good faith!

Comfort thine heart with the red, red wine;
Though love in thine arms chilled into death,
And a lost soul curses thee, under breath,
Where the river mirrors the soft star-shine.

Revel unseen, O Pharisee!

Though thine house is builded on shifting sands,
On the ruin of them that trusted thee;
And widows and orphans and toilers — see
Thy wronged — who fear thee — silently
Lift up in the dark accusing hands.

Yet who saith ill of our Pharisee,

Though heavy his eyes are once in a while
And a shadow that is not his — ah me!
Lengthens before him. His gold is free,
And he pledges his friends in coffee and tea,
And solemn as erst is his seldom smile.

When thy fame's white shrine falls shuddering,

And unto the people's eyes lays bare
Each livid, loathsome and crawling thing,
With fetid breath and venomous sting
That has fed and fattened undreamed of there —

Whither wilt flee — thy shelter riven —

And thy name men's scorning and mockery?
Oh, the honest sinner is half forgiven.
For him there is pity on earth and in Heaven —
But where for the fallen Pharisee?

CONSUMMATUM EST

Do I wake or dream? Is it sight or seeming?
Dying — the sword uplift and gleaming?
I am fair and strong,
I had planned me a day serene and long.
Is it ended quite —
Planning and labor and love's delight?

O Lord, Life-Giver, Life-Cherisher, see
The little lives that have need of me,
Hearts bound in mine.
By the love of that human Heart of Thine,
Tender for all,
The awful word of Thy power recall.
My kindred dear
Are not in Heaven, but all, all here —
Oh, much to live for and much to love,
Hast Thou given me, God above!
Over and done!
Why, the best of my life is but just begun.

TRUCE

STAY, thou art tired; thy Father bids thee rest,
Tarry awhile beneath the palm-trees' shade,
Eat of the fruits around thee, unafraid,
Drink of the limpid stream His hand hath blest.
After the sore, sharp struggle comes a guest,
Sweet Peace, with respite, even as thou hast prayed.
Rest, till refreshed and with new strength arrayed
To face the old-time perils. Short at best
This welcome truce. Yet, linger not, but swift,
Go forth when thou art summoned, else I fear
Thy joy will turn to grief; the hot, red sand
Over the delicate flowers will drift and drift,
And choke the stream, now purling crystal clear,
And change the garden to a desert land.

SATURNINUS

HE might have won the highest guerdon that heaven on
earth can give,
For whoso falleth for justice — dying, he yet shall live.

He might have left us his memory to flame as a beacon light,
When clouds of the false world's raising shut the stars of
heaven from sight.

He might have left us his name to ring in our triumph song
When we stand, as we'll stand at to-morrow's dawn, by the
grave of a world-old wrong

For he gave thee, O mother of valiant sons, thou fair and
sore oppressed,
The love of his youth, and his manhood's choice — first-
fruits of his life, and best.

Thine were throb of his heart and thought of his brain and
toil of his strong right hand;
For thee he braved scorn and reviling, and loss of gold and
land.

Threat and lure and false-hearted friend, and blight of a
broken word —
Terrors of night and delay of light — prison and rack and
sword.

For thee he bade death defiance — till the heavens opened
wide,
And his face grew bright with reflex of light from Him Who
for all of us died.

And his crown was in sight and his palm in reach and his
glory all but won,
And then — he failed — God help us! with the worst of
dying done.

Only to die on the treacherous down by the hands of the
tempters spread —
Nay, nay — make place for the strangers! we have no right
in the dead.

But oh, for the beacon quenched, that we dreamed would
kindle and flame!
And oh, for the standard smirched and shamed, and the
name that we dare not name!

Over the lonesome grave the shadows gather fast;
Only the mother forgives and weeps, and comforts her heart
with the past.

IN THE LIGHT OF DEATH

AS from afar I heard a praying voice:
"Oh, God Almighty and All-Merciful,
Enter not into judgment with this dust;
For though he brake Thy law, he kept the faith,
And in Thy sight is no man justified."

Oh, still from far away the praying voice:
"Oh, God Almighty and All Merciful!
Look down upon this creature of Thy hands!
Sins of his youth and ignorance forgive,
Remembering his sorrows and his faith."

And still I moaned: "Where are my harvest sheaves?"
And still I feared to lift my empty hands.
(For I was compassed with the light of Death)
And still I moaned for my unfinished tower,
And for the wreck and ruin of my life.

Then one in Angel-wise drew near to me
And laid within my hands the Crucifix,
And murmured: "Show God this with the broken heart
And contrite that He never will despise,
And weep no more for thy scant harvesting."

And still in Angel-wise, "Go forth in peace,
And see God's mercy justify itself
Unto His justice. May they both be praised!"
Then forth my soul would fare, right comforted —
But lo! again the doors of Death were shut.

AS MAN WITH MEN

(J. J. McC.)

*“And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armor.”*

OF all the knights of the olden story
Who went in quest of the Holy Grail,
But three were worthy to pierce the veil
And look on the Vision in its glory,
A light that never can change nor fail.

And one who saw it died of the seeing,
Home-sick for Heaven; and one forswore
The camp and the court forevermore,
And the love that gladdens a strong man's being,
For the dim old abbey of Elsinore.

But one came back to the common chances
Of the olden life and the olden way;
Strong in the march and bold in the fray,
And manful under applauding glances —
“Unchanged,” said his comrades of every day.

“Lo! here the man that hath seen the Vision,
The Portent holy and marvellous,
And yet remaineth a man like us
Albeit nobler in his decision,
Or a shade more gentle and piteous.

“Or, mayhap in the onset — oh, not braver —
For brave our knights are as men can be —
But steadier, surer of aim than we —
And always in flush of the victory, graver,
Self-mastered still at our revelry.

“And never near at the spoils’ dividing,
For the dead and the wounded claim his care —
And the fallen foes of his mercy share,
And the lost ones flock to his feet for guiding,
And even the breath of the plague he’ll dare.

“Of the meanest serf is he sworn defender,
O’er the least of the little ones lifts his shield;
But he shrinks aside and his lips are sealed
When the poor acclaim him as their befriender —
As a sinner might, were his sins revealed.

“Lo! here the man that hath seen the Splendor,
And still remaineth a man like us,
No mystic, silent and marvellous,
But with kindly word and blithe song or tender,
To lighten the march laborious.”

And they knew not, like us, till they read his story
In the light of his dying — oh, not till then —
That the marvel of marvels is wrought us, when
God hides, as the growth of a once-seen glory,
A saint and a hero, as man with men.

TWO SONGS FOR ERIN

A VIGIL SONG FOR ERIN: 1881

CAN ye tell me aught of the night
Oh, ye who have steadfast stayed,
Unwearied and unafraid,
Through nights of deeper gloom —
Shadowed by prison and tomb?
Friends of the sore-tried Right,
Who loyal watch have kept
While the faithless feasted and slept,
Now, from the heights you've won,
Whence you see so far and clear,
Speak, for we wait in fear, —
Hope was so oft undone! —
Shall Erin see the sun? —
Oh, chide us not nor scorn —
Think of our troubled dreams
Oft lit by auroral gleams
That we thought were the rays of morn:
Is a glimpse of the dawn in sight?
Ah, the mountains block our view,
And we wait a word from you,
Some presage of coming light!

There's a light in the East, we know,
Watching it quiver and glow,
New hope in our hearts is born.
Is it the Star of Morn,
Or only some wandering Star
Soon to be dimmed or clouded,
While Hope for the grave is shrouded;
And our hearts so bitter fated,
Again with bitterness sated? —
And the morning still afar!

DAY-DAWN IN ERIN

December 6, 1921.

“SHE died from yon,” they said, “in the flush of her
bridal bloom.”

But they lied with their hearts and lips — Beloved, thou
couldst not die.

They tore thee out of my arms, and shut thee alive in the
tomb,

And guarded with fire and sword the place of thine agony.

And they laughed but yester-eve in their cruel strength and
scorn,

Saying: “Still through the years he seeks her — O fondest,
faithfullest!

And many a fool to follow his beck on a quest forlorn,
Nor ever a one aweary on the long and futile quest!”

Dreamed they their swords could sunder the bonds of soul to
soul?

Or that flames could daunt my purpose, though lit from the
central hell?

Ah, they thought I grieved like a man, that time would ease
my dole

With a new fair face, forgetting what late I loved so well!

They knew me not — changeless, deathless, what time with
heart grief-riven

For thee in mortal seemings the paths of pain I trod —

But I am Freedom, Freedom, and I’ve stood in the highest
Heaven,

With the seven armored angels girding the throne of God.

Courage, mine own, nor falter, but hold for thy life to me;
Look not back where the flames and the swords and the
serpents were —

Look up! for yon stars are the souls of the men who died for
thee,

Crushed, striving to roll the stone from the door of thy
sepulchre.

Ah, me! but thy face is wan, and thy sweet eyes dimmed
with tears,

And the soul on thy pale lips flutters as if it were fain to flee;
Ah, God! for thy years of anguish, thy tortured, murdered
years,

Ere I rent thy tomb and fled through the valley of death
with thee.

But oh, for our journey's end, and home, and the light of
dawn,

And the sweet green earth, birds singing, the balm of the soft
spring air!

Oh, to hold thee close to my heart till the chill of the grave
is gone,

And kiss thy lips and thine hands and the strands of thy
long, fair hair!

Courage, mine own, nor falter, but cling for thy life to me;
Hear the home-welcoming music, nor faint nor far away.
And the conquering Cross ablaze in the heavens above us —
see!

We are out of the shadow of death — look up to thy dawning
day!

VINDICATION

(To J. F. F.)

IF the Lord build not the house, they labor in vain that
build it;

If the Lord keep not the city, vain watch the watch-
men keep.

O man, to say: "It shall not be!" when the Lord in Heaven
hath willed it;

To think to sow the poison seed and a wholesome harvest
reap!

Oh, the chariots and legions and banners! the gold upon the
high-ways;

And their gay and confident scorn, deriding man's diadem!
While the multitude of thy toilers streamed forth from the
modest by-ways,

Yea, the poor went to the onset — but the Lord went
forth with them.

The women were cold with fear, as they lifted their hands to
heaven,

And lit their votive lamps, and watched the sacred shrine;
And prayed the Leader's name and that victory be given.

And their prayers rose up resistless where a myriad altars
shine.

Lord, not in the pillar of fire, but oft in the cloud concealing
The joy of Thy help and presence, but still we faltered
not;

For somehow, our trust was stayed in the sureness of Thy
revealing,

And Thy strength to break the snare and the plot and
counter-plot.

The Lord loveth His poor, and chasteneth but to uplift
them;

With Him they pass through the wall of fire, nor singe a
garment's thread.

He hath made them one and strong through a terrible hand
to sift them,

That at last they may sleep and eat of their hard-won
bread.

Now the Lord buildeth the house, and with Him we must
build it;

And the Lord keepeth the city, else vain our watch to
keep.

His strength upon one and all to labor as He hath willed it,
And to sow the seed for a harvest — the goodliest man can
reap.

SINKING ON THE TITANIC

O LORD of the land and the sea! Thou hast brought us
hither to die —
Thou art just and Thy judgment is right. Yea, who shall
question why?

Mine was the wealth of the world; and lo, from my hand it
slips!
Mine were the joys of life; they are bitter brine on my lips.

And all my days and my years — they are spread as a scroll
in Thy sight;
And still, I can will and unwill. O God! was there any-
thing right

But just at the last my taking the chance to lay down my
life
For the stranger erst unseen, as well as for child and wife!

“Nearer, my God!” they sing. And the Cross — on the
Cross Who died
But the Lord of life and death with the sins of the world at
His side?

Wilt down with us on the Cross, and into the depths of the
sea,
While all Thy billows and waves in their wrath go over me?

O Christ, my Christ, Thou art God! and whatever my
meed of ban,
Wider than sin is Thy mercy, and . . . Man-God, Thou
judgest man.

COLUMBUS THE KNIGHT OF FAITH

HE gave a world to men —
What word of mortal ken
Immortal praise best saith,
Oh, praise the Knight of Faith!

“Oh, for a shorter way,”
Cried the men of pillage and fray,
“To the unsearched Ind afar,
Where the treasures of ages are!”

“A short way thither must be,”
Spake Columbus steadfastly,
“And its perils I will dare
For a prize beyond compare.

“To more than ye dream or name
I will trace a way of flame,
Oh, quest of the Crucified!
Oh, souls for whom He died!

“And well may the diamond shine,
And the red gold in the mine;
For a pledge in my hands they’ll be
Christ’s Sepulchre to free.”

Oh, the way to the Land Unseen
Is the Way of the Cross, I ween.
Seeking it, youth was spent,
Seeking it, manhood bent.

Seeking it long years, came
Little but scorn and blame,
The taunt and the bitter word —
The pain of hope deferred.

But vain to quench or dim
The fire in the heart of him
Whose way to the Land Afar
Was lit by God's own Star.

Not to far Ind, great soul!
Thine was a grander goal,
Meet for the grandest faith,
Say it with fearless breath.

Since theirs, who followed from far
The Lord Christ's wonderful Star,
Lighting and guiding them
Till it stood at Bethlehem.

Not thine to free Christ's tomb,
But Christ's people — through the gloom
Thy path for the feet of Faith
To the souls that sat in death.

Thine to plant, with flag unfurled,
The Cross on the New World,
And the fruit of that seed to be
Earth's noblest liberty.

A JUBILEE OF JUSTICE
MOST REVEREND JOHN J. WILLIAMS

1845-1895

THIS is a Jubilee of Justice. Seek,
When ye the praise of him we honor speak,
Only in pages solemn of Holy Writ,
And find therein our Father's title fit:
"A Just Man"—as the Holy Spirit saith
Of him who toiled for Christ at Nazareth.

Oh, Justice is of virtues kingliest —
Strength of the weak, relief of the oppressed.
Naught dazzles, films, nor dims its steady eyes,
Piercing fine-woven webs of sophistries;
Seeing the limit of the longest fame,
Its heart unmoved alike by praise or blame.
What to the judge is mortal voice or pen
When to his verdicts angels say, Amen?

Oh, we may trust his mercy fearlessly
In whom of God-like Justice most we see;
And Justice is the safety and the pride
Of all beneath his righteous rule who bide,
And for his life rejoice, and fervent pray —
Long may he wield the sceptre of his sway.

Strength is in silence. Few the words and plain
From fifty years of labor that remain
To justify the gleaner, fain to tell:
"Thus spake he when a certain thing befell."
But passing words that please the shallow sense,
His noble works' abiding eloquence,

That stand and speak for him on every side —
Temples of God and knowledge opened wide,
Houses of rest and healing, shrines of peace
Where prayers like incense rising never cease.

How came they? Oh, as light comes silently,
And as persuasive, they as beacons be,
Steadfast and quenchless wheresoever set,
To all men open. Speak the people's debt
Unto their builder; and your voices raise
To God Who gave him for his length of days.

Oh, Generous, and Just, and Silent, we
For golden deeds keep Golden Jubilee.
Bear with our praises — thou who lovest not praise —
As father with his children when they raise
Their voices round his hospitable hearth
In token of their honor and his worth;
Love and self-love as now, in every tone,
For all thou art and that thou art our own.

CITY OF REFUGE

A CONVERT

PRAISE? Friend, in sooth,
You do me grievous wrong.
I had my youth, —
Yea, and my youth was long.

Fame, beauty, gold,
Lovers — a score.
What lips so bold
As whisper change in store?

Fell a dark day
My pleasant path across;
All fled away
From pain and shame and loss.

Passed from friends' ken,
Alone the thorns I trod;
All failed — and then
I gave myself to God.

* * *

Oh, my short years
With lost years to retrieve!
Oh, wasted years,
Now real griefs are to grieve.

Praise? win me grace
From my past's accusing eyes!
Praise? hide my face
From angels' sad surprise!

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

THOU hast pitied my heart's great needing,
Thou hast stooped to my low estate,
And opened unto my pleading
The long-sealed beautiful gate.

Through the wilds of gloom and sadness,
Thou hast been my guide and guard,
Into the light and gladness
Of the courts of Thy house, O Lord.

Why should I fear or falter
Under a roof so blest?
Here, near Thy holy Altar,
Surely Thy child may rest.

Here in Thy house it endeth,
My quest that was erst so vain,
For the Spirit of Peace descendeth,
Stilling the olden pain.

In Thy House, my Father, never
Is grief that burns and stings,
Nor the anguish of lost endeavor,
Nor the shadow that chills and clings.

For Thy love makes rest of labor,
And gain of the bitterest loss,
And the glory and joy of Thabor,
In the shade of the drearest Cross.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS EVE

STIR up Thy might, dear Lord, and come!
The world is sick for Thee.
Sorrow and sin have reached their sum,
The night goes wearily.
For every Caesar at his wine
Are myriad slaves undone;
Light of the World, arise and shine
From the eyes of Mary's Son!

Stir up Thy might, O Lord, and come!
O Lord, make no delay!
For Faith is faint, and Hope is dumb,
And Love hath lost his way;
O Earth, bud forth the Saviour meek!
Clouds, rain the Holy One!
Hope of the World, arise and speak,
With the lips of Mary's Son!

Come, come, and save the lowly, Lord,
For whom no joy remains;
Thy poor ones, ravaged by the sword,
Or done to death in chains;
The childing mother piteous,
The sad child-life begun —
Oh, God-love, Man-love, feel for us
In the Heart of Mary's Son.

Come, Just One, come, and with Thee bring
Or recompense or doom;
Lo, fountains in the desert spring,
The wildernesses bloom.
Thy foes crouch down with banners furled,
Thou dawnest — night is done —
Light of this world, and every world,
The Maiden Mary's Son!

A NEW YEAR'S BOOK-MARK

(Adapted from the words of St. Francis de Sales)

WITH the word of a saint let me wish you a Happy New Year!

May God guard you today and tomorrow, and every day,
dear.

The grace of the Father Eternal, the peace of the Son,
And the Paraclete's sweet consolation while all its hours run.

A Holy and Happy New Year, dear, by angels attended,
And Paradise radiant and endless when this life is ended.

VANQUISHED

For a Nun's Profession

YEA, vanquished am I — thrall'd at last, and bound!
Vain, vain to strive against the Strong — all vain
The toil, the tears, the weariness, the drain
Of hot heart's blood from many a cruel wound —
Lost, lost for earth and Heaven! But lo! I've found —
I, a veiled captive in His triumph train,
Joy that effaceth memory of pain.
“Thy days,” the world said, “run in dreary round;
Naught hast thou gained, but much hast forfeited.
Art thou not fain — speak true! — again to be
Unfettered on the flowery pathway broad?”
“Ah, tighten these dear bonds,” I shuddering said —
“My Conqueror, but not mine Enemy,
Nay, but my Friend of friends, my King, my God!”

BECAUSE SHE HATH LOVED MUCH

O MARY, Mary Magdalene,
With golden hair laid low
Before His feet Who cleansed thy sin,
For all thy love and woe —
What heedest thou that scornfully
They at the feast look down on thee,
Whose soul is pure as snow?

Beneath the cross, O Magdalene,
Art fain Christ's pangs to share;
The blood that saves the souls of men
Upon thy golden hair.
The feasters or in shame or fear,
Art fled, but thou art faithful here,
Shame of the cross to bear.

Beside the tomb, O Magdalene,
That first white Easter Day,
Lo, He Who died is risen again,
And shineth on thy way.
Not yet hath Peter seen His face,
Unto thy lowly love the grace
For which thou daredst not pray.

O desolate Mary Magdalene,
Hid in the desert drear,
Athirst to see His face again,
Athirst His voice to hear!
Who saw Christ in His loveliness
Could ever be content with less
Till His glory shall appear?

O Blessed Mary Magdalene,
Who walked awhile by sight,
While we life-long by faith, I ween,
Press toward the self-same Light;
Oh, were our faith and love like thine,
Methinks the Risen Christ would shine
Once on our weary night!

SAINT FRANCES AND HER ANGEL

THE lovely land of Heaven is not so far away,
For close, dear child to you and me, or bright or dark the
day,
A blessed Angel walketh and guardeth us in love,
With never a cloud between his face and the Father's face
above.

Now, who of all men's children this Angel guide hath seen,
To tell us of his radiant eyes and grave and gracious mien?
But one in saintly story to whom the grace was given
To see her Guardian Angel as he seeth God in Heaven.

The wedded saint, Saint Frances, with her little children
fair,—
The saint of lowly duty, the saint of lofty prayer.
Mother and nurse to God's dear poor, yet saint of love and
home,—
The people's saint, no dearer saint 'mong all the saints of
Rome.

In the Eternal City her footsteps you may trace
From the palace of her childhood to her last resting-place,
'Mid old Rome's hoary monuments of glory and of shame
In the dim days of the Tarquins, ere the Christ of Mary
came,—

Dreaming the while as I dreamed, of her Angel at her side,
In whose clear shining, hut and hall were equal glorified.
Dear child, for sweet Saint Frances the day was never done,
Nor torch nor lamp she needed after the set of sun,

But wrought with pen or missal conned, or humble needle
plied,

Whene'er she would by the steady light of the Angel at her
side.

Oh, would, e'en for a moment, like grace for you and me!
Or, better still, like worthiness. Our guerdon may not be

To walk dim earth in Heavenly light as dear Saint Frances
walked,

To talk with Angel, friend to friend, as dear Saint Frances
talked.

But if we have her Godward will, the while we walk by
Faith,

Even into the valley of the darksome shadow of death,

A-sudden in the darkness the wondrous light will rise.

We'll see, like her, our Angel, albeit with fading eyes,

And know in kind the dawning of the Everlasting Light,

While Hope is lost in certainty, and Faith is lost in sight.

NOT LOST TO SIGHT

SO sad in life, even when thy lips were smiling,
Those comforting, compassionate eyes of thine;
So eloquent, another's pain beguiling,
 "Lo, my friend grieves, and all his grief is mine."
Who knew thee came to thee in trust unbounded —
Was ever depth thine own soul had not sounded?

I wonder is it joy to thee in Heaven,—
 Oh, loving, helping, giving, — now to know
The love and grief to thy dear memory given.
 Thou art not gone — we cannot let thee go —
Beyond our reach — ah yes! — and crowned with light,
But still in sight — oh, never lost from sight!

And shall it be in vain, oh, dear befriender?
 Nay, ours the blame, if thou no blessing bring.
Thou art unchanged — man-brave and woman-tender,
 And, Christ-like, merciful and pitying.
Look with remembering eyes to God, while we
Look on thee and grow faintly like to thee.

AN ALTAR LAMP

(For E. C. D.)

OH shining meek and shining bright,
An Altar-Lamp, indeed!
With ready, tender, helpful light
For groping wanderer's need.

Without the temple-walls he stands,
His heart is sore with sin; —
Through pictured saints' outreaching hands
Thou beckonest him within.

Into the House of Christ the Lord,
The wanderer's rest from roaming —
Where robe and ring and festive board
Await his longed-for coming.

Sweet beacon-light, what joy is thine!
I breathe, in far-off greeting; —
So near, so near the Heart Divine,
Thou tremblest with its beating.

More joy to thee will yet be given,
When comes the Eternal Rest; —
Christ's Altar-Lamp on earth, in Heaven
A star upon His breast,

There, shining meek and shining bright,
Wilt know, O fair and dear!
How many a Heavenward-leading light,
Thy flame enkindled here!

THE CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART

(To T. J. C.)

LORD, to Thy glory this new-risen shrine!
We've given our best and know it all unmeet;
We strew our lives like flowers before Thy feet,
And still be Thy glad debtors, Love Divine.

'Tis ours and Thine — font, bier and altar-throne;
Our best of earth and all of Heaven meet here —
Fair bride, sweet child, and old dead mother dear,
The sinner shriven, the weak to saint's strength grown,

All-Giver, what are our poor gifts to Thee?
And what are we that Thou shouldst crave our love,
And prize Thine own — given back in sign thereof,
As father with his child's gifts tenderly!

With pity for our poverty atone,
And, even as Thy Heart hath shared our grief,
And craved, like ours, for comfort and relief,
Share with us here, our love hath built Thy Throne.

THE PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD

A Free Translation

REMEMBER, Mother, throned in Heaven's splendor,
That never on this earth has it been said
That any heart which sought thy pity tender
Was left un comforted.

So, wearied of world-friendship's changing fashion,
And bankrupt of world-treasures utterly,
And trusting in thy mercy and compassion,
I come at last to thee.

Why name to thee my needs in my entreating —
Thou, taught in human hearts by the Divine —
Long time ago, when soft His Heart was beating,
Fond Mother, close to thine!

Oh, plead with Him who on thy breast was cherished,
Sweet sharer in the world's Redemption Pain!
Oh, let it not be said that I have perished,
Where none came yet in vain!

AT A GRAVE ON EASTER-DAY

Credo . . . in Resurrectionem Mortuorum

I KNOW the sting of death — its victory —
Since one more dear than mine own life is dead;
And I can never more be comforted,
Whatever love may come in years to be,
Till God give back what death has wrenched from me.
Yet, ye would slay my hope. Who was it said
“There is no resurrection for such dead,
What thou hast lost hath perished utterly?”

False seer! my dead shall live again, I know,
Those eyes once oh, so kind! shall smile again;
And the dear hands that wrought but good to me,
Hold mine in warm close clasp. I can forego
Life's solace, and be patient with its pain
Until the day-break and the shadows flee.

IN SIGHT OF HOME

THE shore's in sight, the shore's in sight!
The longed-for lights of home I see!
I sing, for very heart's delight —
And you, my friend, thro' dark and bright,
I know that you are glad for me.

It was a stormy voyage, friend: —
And dare I dream the worst is o'er?
Drear presages of hapless end
Dismay me not; — yet heaven defend!
Ships have gone down in sight of shore.

I ought to be afraid, I know,
My wayward past remembering;
Yet, calmly into port I go.
Whose "Sursum corda" cheers me so?
How is it I am fain to sing?

Is it because my Mother stands —
The Virgin-Mother, fair and wise —
Just where the waves break on the sands,
Reaching to me her welcoming hands,
Lifting to God her praying eyes?

* * *

O friend, I'm drifting from your sight —
The Home-lights brighten momentarily —
Yet lift once more your signal-light,
In answer to my last good-night,
And tell me you are glad for me!

A PRAYER OF HOPE DEFERRED

THE voice of my desire
Ascendeth night and day;
In dreams I plead my waking need,
And still God saith me nay.
Oh, still the pathway barred,
And still the heart unmoved;
And still my faith, thro' pain and scathe,
To uttermost is proved.
Good is the gift I crave,—
But have I craved amiss,
And is the word of grace unheard
For mine unworthiness?

Oh, Mother of fair love,
Mother of holy hope,
Ask it for me, for unto thee
All hearts and doors must ope.

The flame of my desire
Is grievous unto me;
For seldomest within my breast
Is hope in mastery.
The hopes of lowly hearts
Should match their low estate,—
When yon fair light shineth most bright
Am I most desolate.
For then mine humbleness
Is plainest in my view,
Oh, who am I to dream so high,
And have my dream come true!

Yet, Mother of fair love,
Mother of holy hope,
Thy prayers prevail all heights to scale,
Thy touch all doors to ope.,

Ah, me! my heart's desire!
Yon little child tonight
Full eagerly would snatch from me
The lamp I bear alight.
And that I love the child,
My heart his cry withstands,
"I want the light! I want the light!
I want it in my hands!"
Oh, am I like the child?
Oh, what if this should be
Shown me in sign of Love Divine
'Twixt my desire and me!

Oh, Mother of fair love,
Mother of holy hope,
Another prayer! No more I dare
With Love Divine to cope.

THE MAGNIFICAT OF MADELEINE SOPHIE BARAT

Written for the centenary celebration at the Boston Convent of the Sacred Heart of the founding of the Society by Mother Madeleine Sophie Barat, on November 21, 1800. She was Beatified in 1908 by Pope Pius X, and canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1926.

RESTING where rise the cloisters and the towers,
Where spread the fruitful fields and gardens fair
Of a white home of peace and wisdom — home
Of the sweet virgins of the Sacred Heart,
I heard the Lord Christ's prayer: "Thy Kingdom Come!"
And His Heart spake as when He dwelt with men —
"Lo, come I to cast fire upon the earth.
My will that it be kindled.— Lo, a Man,
I come to draw the hearts of men to Mine,
By the strong cords of Adam, bonds of love,
To give them to Thee, Father. They, being one
As We are, that Our love may rule the world,
And none of them Thou gavest Me fall from Me."

Hearken, the master chord of these white lives —
Their prayers ere sunrise touch the spires to flame,
Prayer of laborious days and holy nights —
I sleep, but my heart watcheth — all for Him.
Yea, this the music to which minsters rose,
In Old World and in New, in every clime,
As for Scholastica in Italy,
Brigid and Hilda in the Northern Isles,
In ancient days, ere the New World was dreamed.

For Him, Who took the children to His Heart,
Their gentle shepherding of childhood fair —
Daughters of mighty houses, meekly schooled
In grace and wisdom in the altar's shade,

Like Mary and the maids of David's line
In fair Judea's temple. Nor less dear
The daughters of the people, schooled as high
For lands wherein the people are the king.
Oh, where a hundred years ago this grace?
Oh, where the glory, where this magnet-fire,
World-wide enkindled for the world's new life?
Where this deep-rooted, many branchèd Tree
Of righteous knowledge coming down from God
Whose fruit Eve's daughters tasting, change and grow
To her sweet likeness who repareth Eve?
Behold, I saw it as a little flame,
Enshrined in heart and brain of meekest maid
That ever sought the virgin's veil to hide
Her beauty in it from all eyes but God's.

*My soul doth magnify the Lord our God,
I, lowliest of the grasses of the sod,
Rise to Him, like the cedar, heart-elate,
Who hath looked down upon my low estate,
And of His might hath wrought great things by me,
All Holy is His Name eternally.*

Ah me, who knoweth as this predestined maid,
So sweetly named, in grace and wisdom grew,
If any loving watcher said of her
As of another, sent to smooth Christ's way
Of righteousness for feeble, faltering feet,
What a one, think ye, friends, this child shall be?

She was as lowly as St. Genevieve,
The shepherdess that conquered Attila,
Yea, lowly was our Madeleine in her cot,
Amid the vines at Joigny, as was Jeanne,
Saviour of France, the while she toiled and prayed,
And hearked the Voices at Donremy. Yea,
You had not found, methinks, in all the earth,
A queenlier gem and lowlier set than she.

The days, I ween, were evil. Darkly lowered
The whirlwind over France, held back till now
Mayhap, for Margaret Mary, in her cell
Close cloistered at Paray. Mayhap for her
That bloom of Heaven a-nigh the gates of Hell —
For this her impious father's wicked court —
Louise of France. Yea, likelier still for some
Sweet saint and victim, never to be known
Till the Last Day dawns, bringing all things to light.

Blood of the lowly by the mighty spilled,
Sweat of the poor for unrequited toil,
Rich man's black theft for poor man's one-ewe-lamb,
Vineyard of Naboth by King Achab spoiled,
God's prophet from the king's face driven unheard —
All cried to Heaven and brought God's justice down.
The untaught people were the scourge of God.
The altar toppled with the throne — for kings
Defiling holy places, claiming God's
Portion for Caesar, grinding in the dust
The faces of the poor — "I am the State."

And as the mighty by the lowly fell
To punish pride, unmatched since those dim days
When God washed His creation clean of man,
Saving the little household of the Ark,
So, when the storm was spent, by God's decree
The mighty by the lowly rose again,
And they who spake for God and read the doom
Of the old order in the falling stars —
Said — "Level up the valleys with the hills,
And teach the multitude as never yet,
And learn of Christ's most meek and humble Heart."

*The mercy of our God is evermore
To them that fear Him. His decrees adore,*

*As casting down the Mighty, He lifts up
His little handmaid; overflows her cup
With good things; from His Own Heart fills her heart,
While hungry, comfortless, the proud depart.*

Oh, mindful of His mercy, He receiveth
His child — with her whosoe'er believeth,
Abiding in His love, as He foretold
Unto our fathers in the days of old.
*Oh, children, praise but Him unceasingly,
I, in His Heart's clear light so lost would be
That none should find a separate ray for me.*

O God, in Whose white light Thy servant dwelt,
O God, by Whose Almighty she wrought
So valiantly for Thee and humankind,
O Heart of Christ, in Whose love was her life,
Lift higher still Thine handmaid. Manifest
Her power with Thee that men may love Thee more,
And praise Thee in Thy saints. Oh, let us see
While the new age is young, the aureole
Of Blessed on her brow, whose name we love,
Whose works remain to glorify Thine Heart.

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